Family Language Policy and School Language Choice in Iraqi Kurdistan Region

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Abstract: This study works on a survey with a number of families whose primary/basic students (school-age children) growing up with at least two languages one of which is the heritage language while the other one is English which is not the majority language yet in Iraqi Kurdistan. Though Kurdish is the majority language and other minorities (including Arabic) are spoken by immigrant or indigenous residents from other ethnic groups that coexist with Kurds, the appearance of a generation within a Kurdish family in Iraqi Kurdistan who don't pay attention to their heritage language is a serious problem this research tries to deal with. That is, the gap of this study could be the identification of the factors that stand beyond the existence of a new generation that spontaneously works on marginalizing the Kurdish language and underestimating the identity of the Kurdish individual. Accordingly, this study depends on a qualitative method to achieve its goal which is found in working on a family language policy which enables the Kurdish family besides the Kurdish individuals to maintain their heritage language and react positively against the second language while they intend to acquire it. Within this context the study focuses on minority language transmission and majority maintenance, drawing on insights from family language policy and choice of language schooling. Though the results highlight the importance of the choice of language of communication between parents as a potential modelling and extra input opportunity in the household besides the choice of language used by each parent to address a child directly, it gives priority to maintaining the heritage language.

Keywords: Family Language Policy, Heritage Language, Child Language Acquisition, School Language Choice, and Majority Maintenance

1. Introduction

Iraqi Kurdistan which is a region where different and complicated linguistic and cultural landscape are found. There are one official language and other minority languages such Arabic (the language of a stable arrival of refugees and displaced people), Assyrian, and Turkman. It is significant to observe that bilingualism is officially applies in the Iraqi federal level mainly when it comes to other parts of Iraq (Talabany, 2013, 65-102). Definitely the coming census indicates that part of the Kurdish Iraqi people are expected to be capable of communicating both in Arabic and Kurdish. Having other minorities in Iraq

gave them the right to use their minority languages to communicate with their family members at home, either alone or combined with Kurdish or Arabic or English. Nevertheless, Kurdish is the dominant language in Erbil, and it is spoken by the citizens on a daily basis (Jukil, 2005, p. 37).

Language policy is a field which tries to examine the beliefs and ideologies people have about language, language practices, and their attempts to affect language practices and to point out the different managing procedures focused on official top-down policies emerging from the policy of explicit regions at a definite period of time (Spolsky, 2004, p. 5). Meanwhile, language policy has traditionally focused on public and institutional contexts such as the school or the workplace, with less attention to the intimate sphere of the home and family. Likewise, noteworthy gaps occur within the field of child language acquisition (King, Fogle and Logan-Terry, 2008, p. 3). There are various language policy domains in which family is detected as one of the most influential areas. More recently, Kayam and Hirsch (2014, p. 54) indicated that the significance and insertion of analyses of bottom-up policies via family language policy explorations, among others, have been recognized and research motivated. Accordingly, family language policy (henceforth FLP) is a recently evolving area in which the family members depend on explicit and overt language planning to practice language with their households, and it is the provision of an integrated overview of research on how languages are managed, learned, and negotiated within families. (King, Fogle and Logan-Terry, 2008, p. 1)

The focus of the present study is on the Kurdish households living in Erbil, the capital city in Iraqi Kurdistan region where the first official language is Kurdish, and where a high number of immigrants are settled and inhabited. The education system of Iraqi Kurdistan region is free and composed of governmental school boards that run groups of local schools which adopt a locally authorized curriculum. There are Kurdish and English as well as private school boards. English immersion programming, for which Iraqi Kurdistan is also cited to be an ideal, is proposed by the private English school boards, as the customer for such programs is generally the children of those families that can afford sending their children to such private schools where entry into English immersion system is usually in kindergarten, at age 4 (early involvement), or in class 1, at age 6 (middle immersion). It is true that students are taught English in the governmental schools when they start their normal study in grade 1 but their exposure to English doesn't include other topics like math, science, and social studies. Though parents have the freedom to enroll their children in their Kurdish or English immersion programs, it is not easy to get them enrolled in English immersion education due to several reasons like higher social economics position of children in these programs; lack or close to the ground support for incapacitated students, compared to English programs, with the covert or overt or supposition that several languages (i.e. English, other minorities languages like Turkish and Assyrian besides Kurdish which is the official language) may be too much to deal with. Another reason could be the geographical locations where such private schools are a challenge and can't be established easily as they are far from the cities and enough teaching staff capable of teaching in English can't be provided. As a matter of fact, those families who send their children to English private schools to receive the highest exposure to English are taking more care of their children than those families whose children joined schools where Kurdish is the medium of instruction. Although ultimate consequences in English –language proficiency may not extremely be the same, in both cases literacy skills are acquired by children who learn to master English in at least a school environment. Further, such

language proficiency contributes to the provision of a solid foundation for evolving and preserving bilingualism or multilingualism (Slavkov, 2016, p. 6).

Notably, it is hypothesized that prioritizing English at the expense of Kurdish in such non-governmental schools affects heritage language in one way or another. For King, Fogle and Logan-Terry (2008, p. 1) the major components of language policy which are restricted to practice, ideology, and management in addition to beliefs the active participants hold in terms of language choice are available within the family domain and can be expressively checked. That is, language ideologies are also hypothesized to play a great role in shaping family language practices and on the connection between different family language policies such as one person-one approach and child language outcome. According to our knowledge the current study could be one of the rare studies aiming at showing English as a language which competes the Kurdish language in Iraqi Kurdistan Region as noticed via the familiarities of those family units whose children are under the threat of English due to the lack of utilizing a FLP lens. Accordingly, this study hypothesizes that the third generation in many families may lose their heritage language, i.e., Kurdish, because these families don't positively sustain their heritage languages while they promote bilingualism.

For King, Fogle and Logan-Terry (2008, p. 2) central questions related to school language policy stay unanswered. That is, questions that revolve around whether and how school language policies can efficiently upkeep second language acquisition and use at home. Meanwhile, to ensure balanced bilingualism it is necessary to clarify essential concerns in terms of bilingual growth including how much and what types of exposure to the two languages are required. Accordingly, answering these two questions is one of the requirements to identify another factor which is considered to be a gap this study wants to cover. The questions this research raises could be: to which degree the Kurdish individual depends on his mother tongue language (i.e., heritage language)? What is the effect of the foreign language on the Kurdish language and how much that impact is? What is the role of the parents and what can they do to confront the impact of such threats?

This study focuses on the Kurdish families, Kurdish individuals as well as the educational institutions like non-governmental schools. Further, the focus of the research has been on the amount, type and frequency of language input of the parents in bilingual and multilingual contexts.

This study is restricted to sociolinguistics and language policy. To answer the above-mentioned questions this study depends on questioning Kurdish family members. Accordingly, this is an ethnographic study of a number of families to whom we have access.

This study is of great value since it is considered to be an influential support for the field by investigating the ways the parents managed FLP and its progress within the process of time particularly when children became adult and language socialization took place in Iraqi Kurdistan. The aim of this study is to observe a sample of groups of families who are looking after bilingual and multilingual children and define their distinctive features, containing household strategies that meet the requirements found within the scopes of FLP and school language choice.

To sum up, FLP is a recently appearing field blending visions from language socialization, child language acquisition and language policy. FLP deals with issues that are theoretically and practically related to how

children's language progress in bilingual and multilingual contexts are managed and stimulated by families and is interested in particular input strategies and models besides wider issues related to culture, identity and ideology (Schwartz, 2010, p. 171-192). It is a precise and justified FLP, appropriate for an individual family's specific conditions and resources can be influential in guaranteeing optimal bi/multilingual consequences (Slavkov, 2016, p. 4). This study examines elements belonging to FLP and school choice (i.e. language of schooling) that have something to do with a child's growth as a bi/multilingual speaker. It also aims at coming across some information related to the location of this study to highlight that Kurdish language, which is the heritage language, will be at risk if no reaction to the process of acquiring second language occurs.

2. Literature Review

Noting the importance of making FLP explicit, much of this research continues to focus on language policy and related language use in a public space like school besides the intimate context of the home. Indeed, with relatively few exceptions, nearly all work on language policy, both theoretical and empirical, has examined language policy in institutional contexts such as the school, universities or the workplace besides the intimate context of the home. Nevertheless, there is nothing to be mentioned in terms of research related to neither FLP nor school language choice in Iraqi Kurdistan. Being a new field of study all over the world, FLP could not found being tackled in communities like Kurdish community. On one hand, there are studies which can be a good source for others to depend on. In their study on 'Family Language Policy', King, Fogle and Logan-Terry (2008, p. 6) figure out an approach which takes into account what families actually do with language in day-to-day interactions; their beliefs and ideologies about language and language use; and their goals and efforts to shape language use and learning outcomes. On the other hand, most investigations of FLP have likewise targeted multilingual homes and communities in which some parents have different native languages, the family's primary language differs from that of the wider community parents and children have different language preferences or competencies, or parents aim to promote a second, foreign, or a heritage language in the home.

What is commonly known as family language models (also named methods, strategies, approaches, etc.) is another significant feature of FLP. Such models generally concentrate on the languages used by the parents with the children and do not take another significant variable. The most common models are: One-person One-language (OPOL/1P1L) in which each parent firmly abides by a language dissimilar to the language of other parent whenever he/she addresses the child; Minority Language at Home (ML@H) is the model which shows that both parents use the minority language for speaking with the child; Mixed Approach is the one which indicates that one or both parents blend the languages in talking to the children; and Majority Language at Home (MajL@H) is the model which uncovers that both parents rely on the majority language entirely and depend on other resources or policies to grow bi/multilingual children. (Slavkov, 2017, p. 3)

According to the model that shows the relationship between parental beliefs attitudes and children's language development there are three types of parental ideologies or attitudes affect linguistic practices in bilingual families. The first type shows that parents often know quite well which languages should be spoken for what purposes in addressing their children. The Second one indicates that parents´ attitudes in terms of specific kinds of connections, such as blending or the usage of slang, affect their own child-

directed speech. The third type shows that the attitudes of the parents concerning language learning and bilingualism also play an influential role in affecting the interactional strategies. (King, Fogle and Logan-Terry, 2008, p. 6)

Though King, Fogle and Logan-Terry (2008, p. 8) believe that the best known one among these models is OPOL, which has been covered broadly in bilingual contexts, Braun and Cline (2010, pp. 110-127) find it possible for trilingual families to use OPOL as well. On one hand, such an approach has specifically something to do with researchers of heritage languages and specialists working with heritage language learners since FLP approaches increase our knowledge and understanding of home language preservation processes in addition to how well heritage language learners are reinforced. On the other hand, scholars that are interested in child language acquisitions have yet to develop a reasonable illustrative model for what made children get raised under similar conditions (example with Kurdish - speaking parents at home and English - speaking colleagues at school) often view such diverse consequences in respect of language proficiency and preference. Nevertheless, it is only by taking a wide-ranging approach that we will thoroughly comprehend the significant cross-disciplinary problem of how the application, realization, and negotiation of family language policies over time besides the short- and long-term influence of such strategies on child language consequences be informed by parental language ideologies.

As far as Iraqi Kurdistan is concerned, this study investigates children who are learning English which is a non-dominant home language in Iraqi Kurdistan Region till now. This is an effort to explore the effectiveness of parental discourse strategies in response to children's often use of the target language by looking at children's subsequent turns. Accordingly, this study adopts one of the most appropriate approaches (King, Fogle and Logan-Terry, 2008, p. 6) mentioned in their study for having strategies through which the children who are learning English could be investigated. Because most of the parents in Iraqi Kurdistan Region speak the same language, and the native language of some of the families is different from the language their children acquire in their native schools, the best model is Majority Language at Home (MajL@H) where both parents use the majority language exclusively and rely on other resources or strategies to raise bi/multilingual children.

'Family language policy and school language choice: pathways to bilingualism and multilingualism in a Canadian context' is the title of an article written by Slavkov in 2016. Concentrating on FLP and language of schooling as two vital variables in respect of the languages that a child acquires, Slavkov, (2016, p. 7) recognizes five general pathways, beside some (non-exhaustive) instances of how a child might make use of any of them. These pathways are proposed to apply to Erbil setting exclusively, but they could be also generalizable across any part of Iraqi Kurdistan region where such non-governmental schools are found.

1. Monolingual Pathway 1O: Official (majority) language only
2. Bilingual Pathway 1O + 1H: Official (majority) language plus a Heritage language
3. Bilingual Pathway 2O: Two Official languages (majority and minority)
4. Multilingual Pathway 2O + 1H: Two Official languages plus a Heritage language
5. Other Multilingual Pathways

Taking the linguistic situation in Iraqi Kurdistan particularly in Erbil non-governmental basic schools into consideration, it seems that the second pathway is close to the linguistic landscape in Iraqi Kurdistan, but

it is not identical 100% as it involves maintenance of a heritage language at home and the transmission of the majority language, English, at school. This pattern relates to families where a FLP works on preserving a heritage language but English as a medium of instruction is not selected. Kurdish-speaking families are free to choose private schools where English is the medium of instruction and enable their children study English as a separate topic and as the language of other topics as well via community exposure. Arabic displaced families could also make use of this pattern through placing their children on this pathway via selecting English as the medium of instruction for them and using Arabic for speaking at home. The fourth pathway pattern is the one which has multilingual consequences because it is only applicable whenever there are families who use a heritage language for speaking. With this pattern, families will work on conveying and preserving heritage language at home. If we talk about Kurdish families, we find them letting their children join an English-language program and Kurdish, the majority language. As a result, such type of social exposure besides their being at school where they get immersed in a program in which English instruction occurs from early on, and/or becomes noticeable in the higher grades of primary school and in high school will help them acquire the majority language. The fifth pathway, which is the last pattern has also multilingual outcomes since it looks like an umbrella for different other FLP and school choice patterns containing two household members using two dissimilar minority languages for speaking at home or cases where multilingualism is the outcome of other combinations of parental and educational resources.

It is critical to stress the fact that the aforementioned patterns stand for only a few likely samples of combinations of home and school resources which result in various linguistic consequences. For sure, there are other family situations and language policies that are not examined here. They could also lead to placing a child along one of the five pathways (Slavkov, 2016, p. 9). Thus, in Kurdish context, a child's linguistic results might get increased even if a child depends on monolingual language resources within the family. Meanwhile, the child's linguistic outcomes might be restricted even if at the family level chances for conveying minority languages occur.

Accordingly, the family unit can be found as a domain where caregiver-child interactions result in the formation and enacting of language ideologies. That is, King, Fogle and Logan-Terry (2008, p. 1) claim that family language policies are significant since they directly participate in shaping the growing pathways of children, contribute to the formal school success and achievements of children in important ways, and as a whole decide on the preservation and future prestige and status of both heritage language and second language. Hereby, questions of heritage language preservation and profits of being bilingual have been widely recognized. Kayam and Hirsch (2014, p. 53) find the background elements and their impact on preserving language and acquiring second language very fundamental in a context where one of the languages is English. They didn't identify which of the languages is English but much of the research is on the impact of the background elements on maintaining language and children bilingualism where the second language is English which is expected to be one of the factors beyond distorting the heritage language.

In states like USA and Israel where the societies are multicultural and multilingual, the focus of the research has been on the efforts of maintaining heritage language as well as the results of diverse linguistic communities. While all immigrant groups worldwide face difficulties in their effort to maintain the

heritage language, in Iraqi Kurdistan the displaced people and immigrants feel safe as they don´t encounter any threat. They aren´t enforced to learn Kurdish language because most of Kurdish people (particularly previous generation) know Arabic a little bit. (Ibid, 55)

In brief, this study tries to show that Kurdish parents and other individuals are in need of an offer and they are to be warned of some new perceptions related to childhood bilingualism and multilingualism in Iraqi Kurdistan Region through inspecting family language practices and schooling which can be found as two interrelated variables that can have a distinctive effect on the number of languages a child acquires and the sort of bi/multilingualism. That is, this study is different from the aforementioned works in terms of dealing with Kurdish context where a child's home language is Kurdish whereas school language is English. As a result, the Kurdish child in such non-governmental schools will be bilingual but being bilingual is not to be the only goal the Kurdish families trying to achieve. They have to give priority to the maintenance of the heritage language. How to do is a gap this study tries to deal with.

3. Methodology

In order to be able to conduct the study, a research survey with families where at least one of their children attended one of the non-governmental schools where the medium of instruction is English, is to be adopted. To maximize the potential number of participants, the survey was designed to be completed by anyone of parents (the father or the mother) who provided information about the child. Single-parent families were also welcomed to participate. To be to the point, this study describes the research design and methodological procedures of a survey study with 51 participants that was carried out in Erbil, the capital city of Iraqi Kurdistan Region, and constitutes the source of empirical data for this article.

3.1 Data Collection

Data collection of this study is a matter of 5 multiple-choice questions and 11 items that were measured on a 7-point Likert scale. The aim was to conduct the survey with 51 families whose children studied in one of the non-governmental schools where English is the medium of instruction. The survey was available in English and Kurdish and was distributed in online formats to offer some equity among families with various socio-economic status and access to technology. Multiple channels of distribution were used, including community organizations, schools representing different school boards (programs in both English and heritage-language programs), and the researcher's network of personal and professional contacts. Participants were also asked to distribute the survey through their networks when possible (snowball effect). Participants' responses came from across Erbil. The participants were given enough time to fill in the survey anonymously and 51 individuals responded. Because not all surveys were fully completed, 51 survey results were included in the analysis. The full list of the items in the survey is included in the appendix of this article. Taking those parents who don't know English into consideration, all of the items were translated into Kurdish. Nevertheless, an English version of the questionnaire was prepared as well.

3.2 Data Analysis

The questionnaire forms were distributed through the social media channels and subsequently categorized according to the themes: language choice and FLP in which parents' strategies and motivations in

encouraging the learning and maintenance of English by the children, children's attitudes and feelings towards English language use and the actual language during the interview could be detected. Though the items of the questionnaire were directed to the parents, there were items related to the children. That is, with regard to the children, the survey asked questions pertaining to the following categories: language of current school program, languages exposed to in an early stage, languages currently understood, and languages currently spoken. Nevertheless, there is no reference to number of siblings, reading and writing abilities (if any) for each language listed, languages used to watch television or play video games and languages in which parents read books with/to the child. With regard to the parents, questions pertained to the following categories: native languages, current languages in which they were most comfortable, languages spoken between parents and languages spoken to the child by each parent. Questions pertaining to the languages spoken to the child by other household members (caregivers/relatives) as well as languages spoken among siblings were also included. In addition, the survey asked several qualitative, open-ended questions with regard to the parents' satisfaction with the choice of language of schooling for their children.

4. Results

This study describes general characteristics of the sample and then offers results from logistic regression analyses identifying factors within FLP and school choice that may have a statistically significant impact on the children's linguistic outcomes.

The 51 responses retained for analysis described bilingual and multilingual children who represented over 1 language from home various language families. The parents were from different ages. 19.61 % of the parents were between 20-29 years while 29.41 % of the parents were between 30-39 years. 45.10 % was the rate of those parents whose age was 40-49. Only 5.88% of the parents were 50 years and above. As far as their highest qualification is concerned, 21.57% of them got diploma whereas 58.82 % of the parents got bachelor's degree. Though 5.88% of the parents got MA and 7.84% Ph.D. certificates, 5.88 of the parents didn't get any of the aforementioned degrees. It is noted that the majority of the participants were female since the rate of the females was 66.67% while 33.33% of the participants were male.

Table 1: The results of the items 1 to 5

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. It is recommended to cooperate the child in using mother tongue language for speaking.	1.96%	3.92%	0.00%	41.18%	52.94%
2. It is preferable to support the child in choosing the language he/she uses it for speaking.	1.96%	11.76%	1.96%	49.02%	35.29%
3. It is advisable to let the child use his/her mother tongue for speaking at home most of the time.	7.84%	17.65%	1.96%	41.18%	29.41%
4. It is advisable to let the child use English for speaking at home most of the time.	29.41%	50.98%	3.92%	11.76%	3.92%
5. I have to advise my child to use Kurdish for speaking at home.	9.80%	17.65%	5.88%	49.02%	17.65%

As far as the items are concerned, the first item focused on helping the child to speak his/her mother tongue. 1.96% of the parents were strongly against cooperating their children and didn't like the idea but 52.94% of the participants were strongly with the idea of helping their children to speak their mother tongue language. 3.92% disagree to do anything which may lead to cooperating their children to pay attention to speaking their mother tongue language while 41.18% of the participants agree to give a hand to their children to give a sort of priority to using their mother tongue for speaking.

Supporting their children to choose the language they prefer for speaking was another item which gave the priority to the willing of the children in terms of choosing the language they prefer. The participants had different ideas and they were neither in total agreement nor in total disagreement. On one hand, 1.96% of the participants strongly disagree while 11.76% of them disagree. On the other hand, 35.29% of the participants strongly agree with this item while 49.02% of the participants agree to support their children and give them the freedom to choose the language they prefer.

It is noted that in both the first and second items the rate of those participants who neither agree nor disagree didn't reach 2.00% since the rate of the neutral participants of the first item was 0.00% whereas the one of those of the second item was 1.96%.

It seems that only 7.84% of the participants strongly disagree to let their children use Kurdish most of the time at home. 17.65% of the participants disagree but the rate of those who strongly agree was greater since 29.41 % of the participants strongly agree to let their children have the freedom to use Kurdish as the language of speaking most of the time at home. 41.18% was the rate of those participants who found their children using Kurdish language for speaking most of the time at home quite normal. 1.96 % of the parents didn't give their opinions in this respect.

29.41% of the participants strongly disagree to let their children use English for speaking most of the time at home and this rate is not delightful at all. Meanwhile, there is a delightful rate which is 50.98%. Honestly, it is not what is expected but it is not bad as well. The rate of those who strongly agree to let their children use English for speaking was delightful since it was only 3.92%. Luckily, the rate of those who agree was not annoying compared to the one of those who disagree. That is, only 11.76% of the participants showed their disagreement to the idea of giving the children the freedom to use English for speaking even at home. 3.92 % of the parents didn't give their opinions in this respect.

Hopefully, the rate of those participants who strongly disagree to the idea of advising their children to use Kurdish for speaking at home was 9.80% and it was not a great rate. 17.65% of the participants were against the idea of advising their children to use Kurdish for speaking at home. 17.65% of the participants were strongly with the idea of enforcing the parents to let their children use Kurdish for speaking at home. Compared to the rate of those who disagree, the rate of those who agree was greater as it was 49.02%. The rate of those who didn't react at all was 5.88%.

Table 2: The results of the items 6 to 10

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
6. I have to let my child use English for speaking at home.	13.73%	33.33%	11.76%	33.33%	7.84%
7. I have no objection to find my child speak in his/her mother tongue with his/her classmates in school.	13.73%	43.14%	1.96%	29.41%	9.80%
8. I think it is a good idea to encourage my child to take more care of his/her mother tongue language even during calling friends at home.	7.84%	21.57%	7.84%	50.98%	11.76%
9. I find it encouraging to have a specific family language plan which enables the child to be selective in terms of using the mother tongue or English.	1.96%	3.92%	1.96%	43.14%	47.06%
10. Learning second language in an early stage affects the mother tongue acquisition in a negative way.	19.61%	29.41%	0.00%	31.37%	17.65%
11. Learning second language in an early stage doesn't affect the mother tongue acquisition in a negative way.	17.65%	31.37%	1.96%	29.41%	19.61%

33.33% of the participants were against the idea of letting their children use English for speaking at home. Meanwhile, 33.33% of the participants showed their agreement to the idea of letting the children use English at home most of the time. 7.84% of the participants strongly agree to oblige their children to use English for speaking at home and this rate gives a good impression in terms of prioritizing English at the expense of the Kurdish language which is the mother tongue. Nevertheless, 13.73% of the participants didn't entirely stand against the idea of letting their children use English for speaking at home. 11.76%

which is not a small rate shows that the participants didn't make any decisions in terms of letting their children use English for speaking at home.

13.73% is the rate which showed that the participants strongly disagree and at the same time strongly agree to have no objection concerning finding their children to speak their mother tongue with their classmates in school. 43.14% of the participants disagreed to have no objection whenever they found their children using their mother tongue with their classmates in school while 29.41% of the participants showed their agreement to having no objections concerning to finding their children speaking their mother tongue with their classmates in school. 9.80% of the participants strongly agreed to give the chance to their children to use their mother tongue for speaking with their classmates in school and unfortunately this rate is not as required. 1.96% of the participants didn't make any decisions in terms of having no objections when they found their children using their mother tongue for speaking with their classmates in school.

7.84% of the participants strongly disagreed to the item which showed the viewpoints of the parents concerning their beliefs that it is a good idea to encourage their children to take more care of their mother tongue language even during calling friends at home. 21.57% of the participants simply disagreed to think that it is a good idea to encourage their children to take more care of their mother tongue language even during calling friends at home. 11.76% of the participants were strongly with the idea of encouraging their children to take more care of their mother tongue language even during calling friends at home. 50.98% of the participants which represents more than half of the participants showed their agreement to the idea of encouraging their children to take more care of their mother tongue language even during calling friends at home. 7.84% of the participants didn't make any decisions in terms of thinking of encouraging their children to take more care of their mother tongue language even during calling friends at home.

1.96% of the participants strongly disagreed to find it encouraging to have a specific family language plan which enables their children to be selective in terms of using the mother tongue or English. 3.92% disagreed to find it encouraging to have a specific family language plan which enables their children to be selective in terms of using the mother tongue or English. 47.06% of the participants strongly agreed to find it encouraging to have a specific family language plan which enables their children to be selective in terms of using the mother tongue or English. 43.14% of the participants which is not a small rate agree to find it encouraging to have a specific family language plan which enables their children to be selective in terms of using the mother tongue or English. The rate of those who didn't make any decision in this respect is 1.96%.

19.61% of the participants strongly disagreed with the viewpoints which stated that learning second language in an early stage affects the mother tongue acquisition in a negative way. The same rate was strongly with the same viewpoint. 29.41% of the participants simply disagreed and rejected the viewpoint which showed that learning second language in an early stage affects the mother tongue acquisition in a negative way. 31.37% of the participants agreed with the viewpoint which points out that learning second language in an early stage affects the mother tongue acquisition in a negative way. Nobody was found to have no comments concerning this item.

Table 3: The results of the item 11

Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
11. Learning second language in an early stage doesn't affect the mother tongue acquisition in a negative way.	17.65%	31.37%	1.96%	29.41%	19.61%

17.65% of the participants strongly disagreed to the item which displayed that learning second language in an early stage doesn't affect the mother tongue acquisition in a negative way. 31.37% of the participants disagreed to the item which indicated that learning second language in an early stage doesn't affect the mother tongue acquisition in a negative way. 19.61% of the participants strongly supported the idea that learning second language in an early stage doesn't affect the mother tongue acquisition in a negative way. 29.41% of the participants agreed to the point which stated that learning second language in an early stage doesn't affect the mother tongue acquisition in a negative way. 1.96% of the participants didn't make any decision regarding the aforementioned item.

5. Discussion

The findings from this study suggests that Kurdish language which is the heritage language of Iraqi Kurds in Iraqi Kurdistan will be at risk if no reaction is detected towards the way English as a second language is acquired. The study didn't arrive at the expected results because the rates of the responses of the results were not plainly given. In some of the items the participants gave answers which contradicted other answers they gave to other items. Definitely the points that were raised in the questionnaire revolved around the hypotheses expected to come true throughout this study. That is, table 1 displayed the results of the items 1 to 5 which are not of help to make a decisive decision in terms of whether the parents gave priority to Kurdish or English. To be to the point, it is preferable to point out that to find more than the half of the participants showing their disagreement to giving their children the freedom to depend on English for speaking most of the time at home is a positive point which gives a good impression in terms of the heritage maintenance. Nevertheless, it is contradicting to find 49.02% of the parents strongly agree with an item which gives the freedom to the child to choose the language he/she uses for speaking because most of the children are trained to speak English and they are using English as their medium of instruction which definitely makes them intend to use English for speaking. This means that priority is indirectly given to English at the expense of Kurdish. Accordingly, Kurdish which is the heritage language may get lost by the new generation since their families can't successfully maintain their heritage language while they promote bilingualism. The results of the last two items shown in table 2 indicated that the parents were contradicting themselves in terms of family language practices because they didn't find second language acquisition problematic in the way of their children's mother tongue. That is, the viewpoints that the parents have in terms of dealing with the way their children acquire languages are in connection with the content of another hypothesis which shows that language ideologies are hypothesized to play a great role in shaping family language practices.

Notably, the rates of the results varied from an item to another item and the highest rate was the one related to the recommendation of paving the way for the child to use Kurdish for speaking. Likewise, the lowest rate of the results was the one which had something to do with FLP and language choice whether at school

or at home. Such a contradiction in these two results complicates the situation since the experiment comes out with a foggy vision and consequence. That is, the families that can afford sending their children to non-governmental schools are with heritage language maintenance and they are at the same time with second language acquisition. Verbally the families are with maintaining the heritage language whereas practically they are with promoting bilingualism. As a matter of fact, it is not easy to take care of both languages equally.

The surprising things in the results that this study found was the positive attitude of the participants towards the mother tongue language. On one hand, their national feeling and sense play a role in the selection of the items. On the other hand, having no idea about the language policy in general and FLP in particular made the participants get confused. Prioritizing such non-governmental schools where English is the medium of instruction by the parents shows that they give priority to English at the expense of Kurdish. Nevertheless, the results showed that they were with whatever supports Kurdish language. Consequently, this study suggests possible future experiment to solve the problem of having a clear vision in terms of maintaining heritage language and the mechanism of school language choice.

The first research question for this study sought to explore how the Kurdish individual relied on his mother tongue. The focus of the study is on the impact of the foreign language on Kurdish language and the role of parents is highly taken into consideration in terms of confronting the impact of such threats. To answer such questions some of the salient characteristics of bilingual and multilingual children of Kurdish families in Iraqi Kurdistan Region are recommended to be highlighted. Though a complicated interaction of elements affects bilingualism and multilingualism, no one can identify a single approach as superior. On one hand, the descriptive data show that most parents (and other adult household members, when applicable) are with using a minority language in communicating with the children (recall table 2). On the other hand, most children were given the freedom to use the language they prefer in communicating with siblings and in engaging with multimedia resources (TV and video games); in addition, most parents didn't find any risk or threat in front of their children when they acquired literacy in the minority language in an early stage of their life (recall Table 3). Thus, the general picture that the data show is one where parents are trying to let their children learn English which is the minority languages and pay attention to their mother tongue language whereas many of the children that are prevailing in the majority language tend to use English as their school language choice. Compared to other research, it is noted that the one of Slavkov (2016, p. 15) comes to conclude that there is an important association between the extent to which parents use a minority language with each other and the probability of a child being multilingual. This indicates that in Salvkov's viewpoint family language use models typically concentrate on the language parents speak directly to children and less so on the language parents speak with each other. This will contribute in increasing the frequency of input and thus make a difference. For King, Fogle and Logan-Terry (2008: 10) the way language is used and assigned by families at home has consequences for cognitive development and educational achievement. What is interesting in the case of Erbil (and potentially across the rest of Iraqi Kurdistan) is that through approaching minority language education in English (immersion and private schools) children are able to not only maintain Kurdish, but potentially an additionally language, if a heritage language is spoken in the family.

Addressing the factors that have a distinctive effect on whether a child improves as a bilingual or a multilingual individual has something to do with one of the basic research questions of this study. A logistic regression analysis figured out that school choice strongly predicate multilingualism because school language choice in the sense of schooling a child in a minority different from the majority language acquired at home is a well-recognized to multilingualism. Accordingly, this study is basically in agreement with what Slavkov (2016, p. 2) claims in terms of the ability of the families to deal with acquiring the second language and keeping their native language unaffected. He believes that it is not the same and it has something to do with influence the families and the educational institutes have on each other. Hereby, the primary question set out to investigate is what are some of the salient characteristics of families who are able to raise bi/multilingualism children in Iraqi Kurdistan without having their heritage language be affected; in other words, what (combinations of) family and educational resources can the parents collect so that their children can acquire and protect the country's official languages (Kurdish and Arabic) and, if applicable, also acquire English which is a threat worldwide. While knowing that variables vary from one family to another and that educational choices or resources also differ from a region to another, this study aims at offering a dispute of a general structure and best exercises for getting bi/multilingual consequences increased in Iraqi Kurdistan in way that they don't affect the heritage language. Hereby, so as to examine heritage language preservation and bilingual growth one must largely rely on FLPs. The view of this study is supported by repeating support for the crucial role the households play in maintaining heritage language and developing bilingualism despite of official, top-down policies.

In an effort to show the impact of parents' belief and decisions on the language choice of their children, King (2001, p. 14) explained that Indigenous Ecuadorian parents believe that exposing children to the second language in an early stage leads them to get confused and makes the parents support Spanish only in the home (and simultaneously, to shift away from their native language.) Unlike the Ecuadorian parents, many of the Kurdish parents who can afford sending their children to private schools don't pay enough attention to whether early exposing their children to the second language confusing them or not, they just prioritize the process of promoting English as a second language. While King and Fogle (2006, pp. 695-712) arrive at that parent made use of diverse sources for clarifying their bilingual parenting decisions, the parents in Kurdish families are different since they don't pay attention to such issues and are not aware of what FLP is.

For Slavkov (2016, p. 7) supporting heritage languages could be normally done by means of running International Languages Programs, for instance, heritage-language schools or Saturday language schools, which can provide the children with non-compulsory language classes outside of systematic program hours. The province can supervise the process and offer free of charge access to such classes. In fact, such optional language cases are mainly offered to refugee heritage-speaking children (and possibly other learners who are interested in such language) when enough numbers of speakers of a given language exist locally (typically in larger urban centers). The heritage language in Iraqi Kurdistan doesn't receive such attention at all. Hereby, it is under a great threat and the new generation may lose it in the future. The Kurdish authority is required to take this point into its consideration.

Despite the necessity of using explicit FLP, this study found that Kurdish parents used implicit strategies, such as the use of repetition or moving on, more often than explicit strategies such as the use of instruction

or correction. Research has thus adopted a various group of family language strategies, each of which has been applied distinctively and related to various child consequences. (King, Fogle and Logan-Terry, 2008, p. 10)

Generally, this and other studies put emphasis on the significance of harmony and correspondence of parents' language choice in children's positive bilingual progress. As Joshua Fishman (1991, p. 113) has claimed efficiently for more than a decade, the basis of language preservation is intergenerational transmission of the language. (King, Fogle and Logan-Terry, 2008, p. 11)

Before proceeding with the conclusion, some limitations of the study need to be acknowledged. As far as the whole models of FLP particularly the one that is most probably applicable in Iraqi Kurdistan region, the findings didn't support the expected results. Hereby, a future study with a larger sample size would have provided stronger results for definite features of the regression analysis could better deal with such a gap and find support for such unexpected outcomes. Moreover, the fact that the survey was reachable only in Iraqi Kurdistan's official languages, Kurdish, and not in other ethnic minority languages, may have restricted the readiness or capacity of the displaced people or the aboriginal people from other ethnic groups to participate due to their weak proficiency levels in Kurdish or English languages. Further, elements such as technological knowledge and also possibly socio-economic status (i.e., access to technology) may have played a role because most of the data were gathered through online sampling. Nevertheless, the data in the present study obviously reveal that using majority language entirely at home results in finding fewer multilingual outcomes among the children while the rate of heritage maintenance would be more likely.

6. Conclusion

This paper intended to study the effect of FLP and school language choice on bilingualism and multilingualism in Kurdish context of Erbil where the appearance of a generation preferring to use English at the expense of Kurdish for speaking is very unavoidable crucial issue. Definitely, English has arrived at the status of extensively being required, used, and learned in most parts of the world, Iraqi Kurdistan included. High-level English language proficiency is a necessity at the universities in both undergraduate and graduate studies. It becomes part of the education system, and it is also the essential requirement for pursuing higher studies in Iraqi Kurdistan Region. No one can ignore that English signage is everywhere, from street signs, public office signs, to shop signs, etc. Though minority language programs (i.e., English immersion and private schools) proved to have a positive association with multilingualism which is a positive point in one way in Iraqi Kurdistan region, it gives a passive impression in terms of the priority the Kurdish students give to English in such non-governmental schools, and this shows that something goes wrong in the Kurdish community. Hereby, this study calls for an urgent targeted intervention and this could be done through having an explicit language policy in general and an active FLP in particular. That is, in bilingual and heritage language maintenance research, a dominant finding points to the importance of the components of FLP, more precisely parents´ practice of language within the household and their contribution to creating and finding outside opportunities and additional activities in their heritage language in deciding on success of the heritage language maintenance and raising bilingual children. In other words, FLP is particularly related when the focus is on bilingual families and on the policies and the strategies they depended on so as to make sure that their child is raised to be bilingual. Likewise, in the

sociolinguistic research, it is common that most would leave their heritage language and become mainly monolingual in the dominant language by the third generation. Nevertheless, this strategy which is best appropriate for bilingual contexts and consequences are even less constant when more than two languages are entangled.

Notably, there are many bilingual families that have children some of whom can use both languages for speaking if it's a matter of two languages in the family while in other cases there are families who try their best to raise their child bilingually, but they don't succeed since their children end up not speaking, at least not using two languages actively. So, this study of FLP looks at these and other families and tries to explore what policies can be beneficial to raising children bilingually productively without ignoring the task of the heritage language maintenance. Likewise, FLP comprises of decisions and actions in three areas, often initiated concurrently. For instance, parents or other caretakers might make decisions in terms of whether and when to use Kurdish or English with their children (status planning), which variety of Kurdish to use for what types of literacy activities (corpus planning), and how and when to formally or informally direct the language (acquisition planning).

FLP has the capacity to cover precisely this gap (how much and what types of exposure to the two languages are needed to ensure balanced bilingualism – remain unclear) by drawing from the substantial body of work in each of these two areas, i.e. (FLP and child language acquisition). Thus, bilingual and multilingual families represent the primary object of interest and source of data in FLP. An important aspect of FLP is children's language choice and language mixing in family interactions, including parental discourse strategies.

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پوخته

ئەم توێژینەوەیە کار دەکا لەسەر ئەنجامدانی ڕاپرسی لە گەڵ کۆمەڵێک خێزان (دایک و باوک) کە مندالەکانیان لە قۆناغی
سەرەتایی/بنەڕەتی دان (ئەو مندالانەی لە تەمەنی خوێندن) دان و لە گەڵ گەورە بوونیاندا بەلایەنی کەم دوو زمان لە گەڵیاندا
گەشە دەکا. یەکێک لەو زمانانە زمانی کلتوری خۆیانە و ئەوەی تریان زمانی ئینگلیزی یە کە هێشتا نەبۆتە زمانی زۆرینە
لە کوردستانی عێراقدا. هەر چەندە زمانی کوردی زمانی زۆرینە و تەنانەت ئەو کەمینانەشە (لە نێوانیاندا کەمینەی عەرەبیش
هەن) کە خەڵکێکی کۆچکردوو یان تەنانەت ئەو دانیشتووە ڕەسەنانەی کە لە نەتەوەی ترن و لە گەڵ کورد دەژن قسەی پێ
دەکەن کەچی سەرهەڵدانی نەوەیەک لەناوجەرگەی خێزانی کوردی لە کوردستانی عێراقی کە هیچ بایەخ نادەن بە زمانی
کەلتوری خۆیان کە ڕووبەڕووی جۆرێک لە شێواندن دەبێ بە هۆی کاریگەری زمانەکانی تری وەک ئینگلیزی و عەرەبی
و تورکی و فارسی و بەهۆی نەبوونی سیاسەتێکی زمانەوانی خێزانی زەنگی مەترسی یەکی ترسناک لێ دەدا کە ئەم
توێژینەوەیە هەولی تاو و توێ کردنی دەدا. واتا بۆشایی ئەم توێژینەوەیە دەکرێ بریتی بێ لە دیاری کردنی هۆکارەکانی
سەرهەڵدانی ئەو نەوە نوێ یە کە بە شێوەیەکی خۆکرد و سەرپێ یی کاردەکا لەسەر پەراوێز خستنی زمانی کوردی و بە
کەم زانینی شوناسی تاکی کوردی. بەم پێ یە، ئەم توێژینەوەیە پشت دەبەستێت بە ڕێنیازی چۆنیەتی بۆ بەدەستهێنانی ئەو
ئامانجەی کە خۆی دەبینێتەوە لە کار کردن لەسەر سیاسەتی زمانی خێزان کە هاندەر بێ بۆ خێزان و تاکی کوردی کە
پارێزگاری لە زمانی کەلتوری خۆیان بکەن و بەشێوەیەکی ئەرێنی کارلێک دەکا سەبارەت بە فێربوونی (بەدەست هێنانی)
زمانی دووەم کاتێک نیازیان وایە بەدەستی بێنن. لەو چوارچێوەیەدا ئەم توێژینەوەیە جەخت دەکاتەوە لەسەر گواستنەوەی
زمانی کەمینە و پاراستنی زمانی زۆرینە بە پشت بەستن بە تێروانینەکانی سیاسەتی زمانی خێزانی و هەڵبژاردنی زمانی
قوتابخانە. هەرچەندە دەرەنجامەکانی ئەم توێژینەوەیە گرەنگی زمانی پەیوەندی کردن لە نێوان دایک و باوک دەردەخەن وەک
نموونەیەکی ڕێ تێچوو و هەلێکی تێخراوی بەژداری لە خێزاندا شان بە شانی هەڵبژاردنی زمان کە یەکێک لە باوان
بەکاری دێنن بۆ قسە کردن لە گەڵ مندال بەشێوەیەکی ڕاستەوخۆ کەچی پێشینە بۆ ئەوەیە پارێزگاری لە زمانی کەلتور
بکرێ.

وشە سەرەکی یەکان: سیاسەتی زمانی خێزانی، زمانی کەلتوری، بەدەست هێنانی زمانی مندال، هەڵبژاردنی زمانی قوتابخانە
و پارێزگاری لە زمانی زۆرینە .

الملخص

تعمل هذه الدراسة على عمل استبيان مع عدد من العائلات التي يكون طلابها في المرحلة الابتدائية/الأساسية (أطفال في سن المدرسة) ممن يكبرون بلغتين على الأقل واحدة منهم هي اللغة التراثية والأخرى هي الإنجليزية التي ليست لغة الأغلبية حتى الآن في كردستان العراق. على الرغم من أن الكردية هي لغة الأغلبية والأقليات الأخرى (بما في ذلك العربية) التي يتحدث بها مهاجرون أو سكان أصليون من مجموعات عرقية أخرى تتعايش مع الأكراد، إلا أن ظهور جيل داخل أسرة كردية في كردستان العراق لا يعير اهتماما للغة التراث التي تتعرض لنوع من التشويه بسبب تأثير اللغات الأجنبية مثل الإنجليزية والعربية والتركية والفارسية وبسبب عدم وجود سياسة لغوية عائلية هي مشكلة خطيرة يحاول هذا البحث التعامل معها. أي أن فجوة هذه الدراسة يمكن أن تكون تحديد العوامل التي تقف وراء وجود جيل جديد يعمل بشكل عفوي على تهميش اللغة الكردية والتهوين من هوية الفرد الكردي. وبناء على ذلك، تعتمد هذه الدراسة على المنهج النوعي لتحقيق هدفها الذي يتجسد في العمل على سياسة لغة الأسرة التي تمكن الأسرة الكردية إلى جانب الأفراد الأكراد من الحفاظ على لغتهم التراثية والاستجابة الإيجابية عند التعامل مع اللغة الثانية عند الحصول عليها. وفي هذا السياق، تركز الدراسة على نقل لغة الأقلية والحفاظ على لغة الأغلبية، معتمدةً على رؤى من سياسة لغة الأسرة و اختيار اللغة المدرسية. على الرغم من أن النتائج تبرز أهمية اختيار لغة الاتصال بين الوالدين كنموذج محتمل وفرصة إضافية للمدخلات في الأسرة إلى جانب اختيار اللغة المستخدمة من قبل كل من الوالدين لمخاطبة الطفل مباشرة، فإنه يعطي الأولوية للحفاظ على اللغة الموروثة .

الكلمات الرئيسية: سياسة اللغة الأسرية، لغة التراث، اكتساب لغة الطفل، اختيار اللغة المدرسية والحفاظ على الأغلبية

Appendix 1:

Survey Questions

1 = strongly disagree   2=disagree 3=neutral 4=agree   5=strongly agree

	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	It is recommended to cooperate the child in using mother tongue language for speaking.	1.96%	3.92%	0.00%	41.18%	52.94%
2.	It is preferable to support the child in choosing the language he/she uses it for speaking.	1.96%	11.76%	1.96%	49.02%	35.29%
3.	It is advisable to let the child use his/her mother tongue for speaking at home most of the time.	7.84%	17.65%	1.96%	41.18%	29.41%
4.	It is advisable to let the child use English for speaking at home most of the time.	29.41%	50.98%	3.92%	11.76%	3.92%
5.	I have to advise my child to use Kurdish for speaking at home.	9.80%	17.65%	5.88%	49.02%	17.65%
6.	I have to let my child use English for speaking at home.	13.73%	33.33%	11.76%	33.33%	7.84%
7.	I have no objection to find my child speak in his/her mother tongue with his/her classmates in school.	13.73%	43.14%	1.96%	29.41%	9.80%
8.	I think it is a good idea to encourage my child to take more care of his/her mother tongue language even during calling friends at home.	7.84%	21.57%	7.84%	50.98%	11.76%
9.	I find it encouraging to have a specific family language plan which enables the child to be selective in terms of using the mother tongue or English.	1.96%	3.92%	1.96%	43.14%	47.06%
10.	Learning second language in an early stage affects the mother tongue acquisition in a negative way.	19.61%	29.41%	0.00%	31.37%	17.65%
11.	Learning second language in an early stage doesn't affect the mother tongue acquisition in a negative way.	17.65%	31.37%	1.96%	29.41%	19.61%